

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4305

February 8, 2012

The Honorable Barack Obama
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am deeply troubled by the Administration's recent decision to require faith-based entities to provide coverage of services that violate their strongly held religious and moral beliefs. This decision is nothing less than a direct affront to our Constitution.

The First Amendment provides that no law may prohibit the free exercise of religion. Yet, the current mandate does exactly that. It is unprecedented in its overreach into the religious freedom of faith-based organizations. Furthermore, this encroachment into the ability of individuals and entities to make personal decisions based on these beliefs sets an unacceptable and dangerous precedent.

Regardless of an individual's particular faith or beliefs, it is impossible to deny that the Constitution protects the right to make decisions based on these beliefs. As a nation, we must ensure that we always uphold the principles and rights upon which we were founded.

It is incumbent on this Administration to ensure that the rights of all individuals and entities to freely exercise their religious and moral beliefs are both respected and protected. Providing an additional year for compliance with the mandate does not address the fundamental infringement on these individuals' Constitutional rights. It merely delays the violation of those rights.

Individuals should not have to "adapt" their beliefs to meet a government mandate. With this in mind, I urge you to withdraw the interim final rule issued by the Department of Health and Human Services and amend it to provide for protections of conscience that will apply to all entities opposed to providing coverage of services they find objectionable.

Sincerely,



JOHN CORNYN
United State Senator